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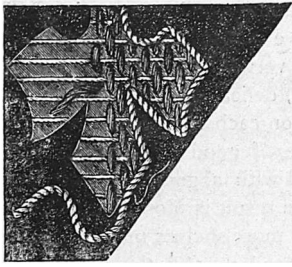


FIG. 3.—DETAIL SHOWING HOW TO MAKE AND BIND THE FLOWERS IN THE WINDOW DRAPERY STRIP.

and arranged by one with a fine eye for beauty of color and form, and a delicate instinct for harmony of line.

This art of room arrangement is one which saves much money, for a woman who owns it does not need to discard unfashionable furniture or out-of-date ornaments, which would be an eyesore in many rooms. By

her faculty of arrangement she discerns just the place where the angular table will fit in and look well and appropriate, and in what corner the objectionable console will lighten the room by its gleam of mirror and gilding.

Among the many pretty notions which have been lately introduced is that of "over doors." The devices introduced for this purpose are numerous—stag's antlers, convex eagle mirrors, masks of statues on oval velvet shields, and even clusters of Japanese or peacock screens. The fancy of a half-moon-shaped design in Venetian mosaic sunk in a deep band of dark velvet, may be new to many, and would have in many rich rooms a very beautiful effect. An arrangement of blue china, and shelves and brackets of ebonized or enamelled wood, always looks well, and a plaster frieze in basso-relievo, as long as the door is wide, will be effective in many rooms; the ground of the frieze might even be colored of a faint green or blue, so as to give it the appearance of a Wedgwood plaque. If you hang a picture over a door, do not let it be a small water-color sketch or anything of that kind, so that its beauty is entirely lost on anybody under eight feet high; the pictures that look best over doors are still-life pieces of flowers or fruit.

WINDOW DRAPERY.

THE style of drapery herewith shown, long in vogue in Europe, is well adapted for excluding the draughts always felt near French windows which reach the floor, while at the ordinary window it serves both for use and ornament. The model of our present design is in the Museum of the Hotel de Cluny, and is made of ocean blue silk reps, ornamented with a strip of garnet velvet with appliqué embroidery. The various antique embroidery stitches produce a charming effect, and are carried out in a very original manner in Algerian silk and gold cording. The darning stitch of the separate figures, the silk reps appliqués and the embroidered appliqué, which are first embroidered separately and then applied, stand out in relief, and imitate the richest

damassé stuff with the best effect. The embroidered appliqué are worked on linen and in a frame, as indeed all the rest must be, in order to keep the pieces perfectly smooth. The interior of the outlines must be filled, as indicated by Fig. 4, with fine Moravian cotton, which is carried backward and forward over the linen, not underneath, so as to form little supports for the double gold and silk threads which are to fill the intervals in opposite direction. These silk and gold threads are held in place by very fine silk stitches, which are always placed between the bars. After finishing the linen embroidery, the pieces are slightly moistened with gluten, and while still damp cut out and pasted on the velvet, and then bound with gold cord, which is sewed down with gold-colored silk.

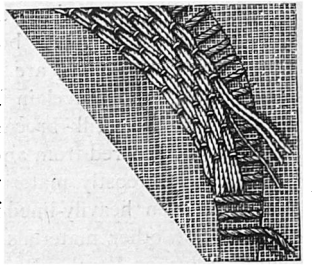


FIG. 4.—DETAIL SHOWING THE STITCH IN SILK AND GOLD THREAD IN THE WINDOW DRAPERY STRIP.

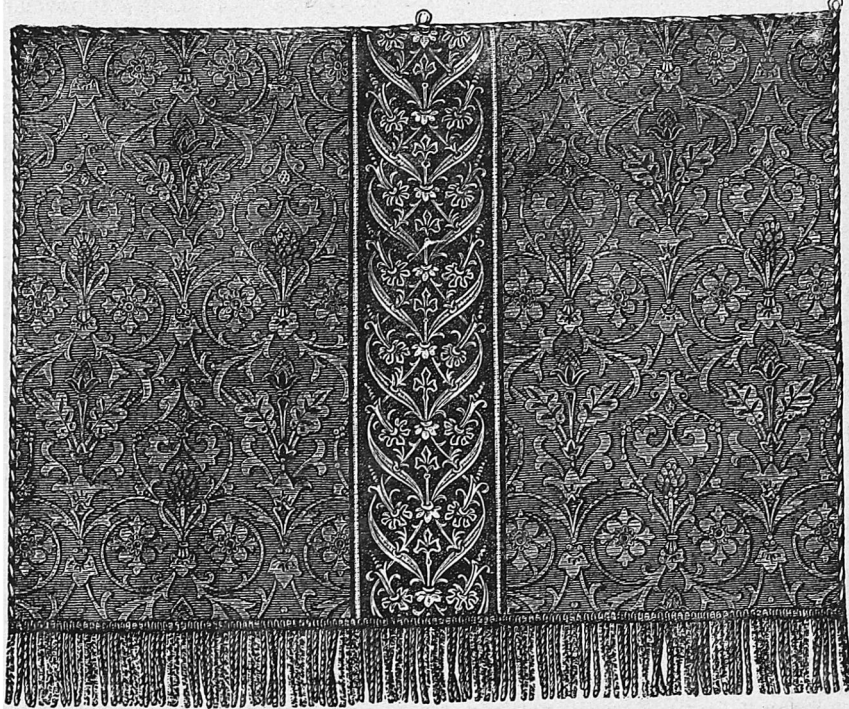


FIG. 1.—WINDOW DRAPERY WITH ORNAMENTAL STRIP IN APPLIQUÉ ON VELVET, EMBROIDERED FROM A DESIGN IN THE CLUNY MUSEUM.

Fig. 2 shows that the border ribbon is made in the same way, except that here four threads are used instead of two. All these darning designs are made of rose-colored saddler's silk. The flowers are of salmon-colored silk reps, and their interior embroidery consists of gold thread and peacock and olive-green Algerian silks. Fig. 3 shows how the gold thread must be stretched across, and the silk worked in and over the bars. All the figures are bound with gold cording, and the veinings all worked with gold thread. The curtain is lined with blue sateen, and the width of the materials used on each side of the velvet band depends upon the width of the window. For very wide windows two bands of velvet may be used. Our model is 39 inches wide, 27 inches deep, and has a fringe $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches

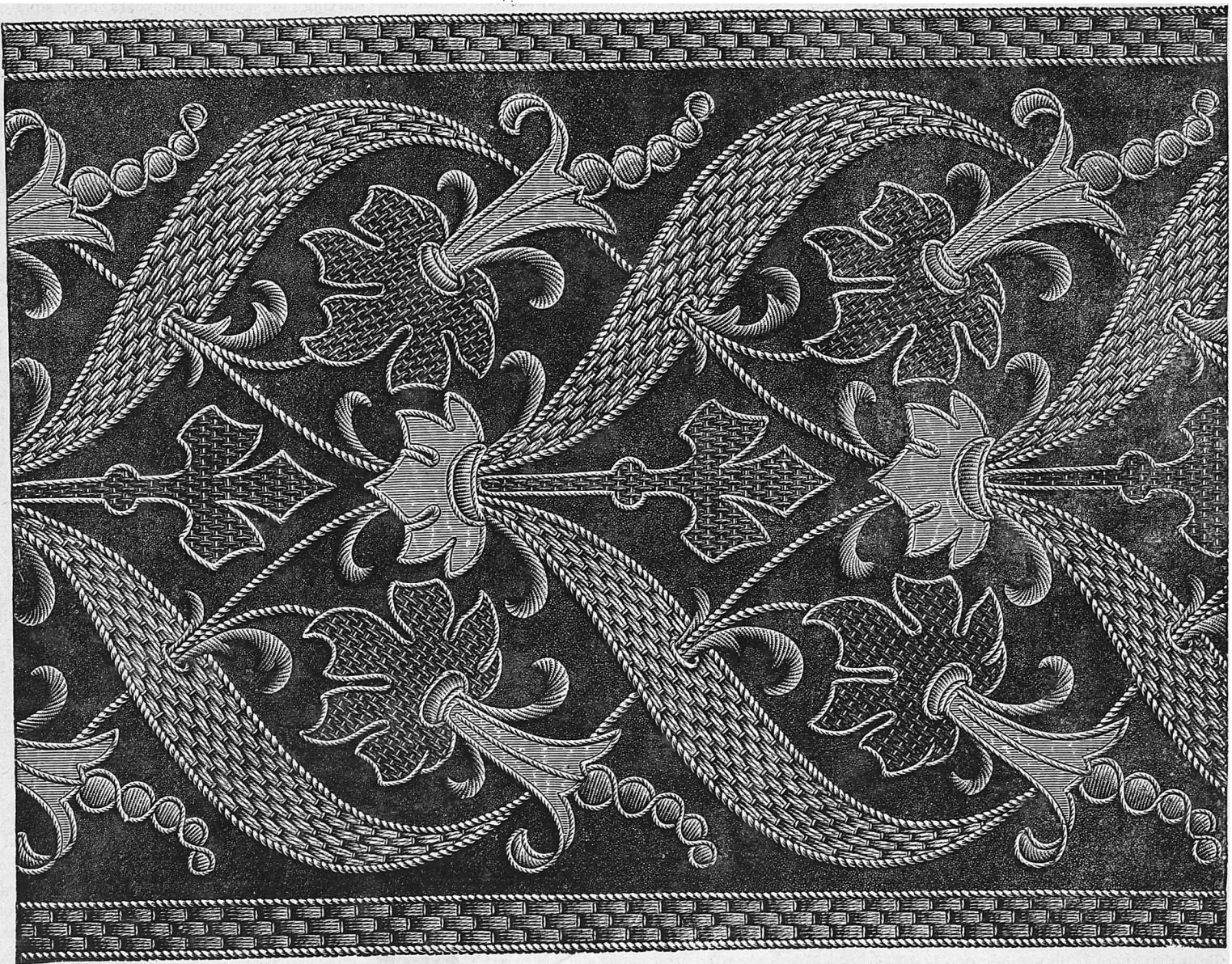


FIG. 2.—FULL-SIZED ORNAMENTAL STRIP IN APPLIQUÉ ON VELVET FOR WINDOW DRAPERY.

deep. It is edged on three sides with a cord matching the blue and garnet. At both upper corners and on the upper centre there are loops by which it can be fastened to round porcelain knobs screwed to the window frame. The silk brocade and velvet for the curtain may be ordered from any dealer in fine upholstery goods; if less costly material is desired, woollen damask, or even heavily-lined cretonne may be substituted. The other materials mentioned above may be had of Selig, or Bentley Brothers, in New York, or of R. H. Stearns & Co., in Boston. Of course the colors may be changed at pleasure, to harmonize with the furniture of the room.

GOOD TASTE IN HOUSE DECORATION.

"WE all love a warm room, a cheery fire, a comfortable arm-chair, cleanliness and brightness. These are the grosser parts of household comfort which all can enjoy. But many of us," says an entertaining writer in *Good Words*, "attempt also to surround ourselves with things not purely utilitarian. We ornament our walls with paper and paint, our doors with mouldings, our ceilings and cornices with plaster-work, our floors with carpets, our fireplaces with marbles, our chairs with chintzes. And the consequence of all this is, that we often spend a good deal of money in making ourselves less comfortable than we should have been if we had spent very little. The motive of this outlay is not unfrequently a desire to obtain cheap magnificence, to imitate with little what richer neighbors have bought with their plenty. And we certainly succeed in imitating their gaudiness. Only we forget one of the essential principles of all good art, that if a thing is conspicuous it should be able to bear close examination. How much better it would be if, instead of trying to produce cheap imitations of things which properly belong only to grand reception-rooms and stately galleries, we could contrive a style of decoration which should be in keeping with the houses in which we live and with our manner of life.

The love of show for its own sake is vulgar. The desire to create a sensation becomes at times such a passion that it is blinding to all discrimination between beauty and ugliness. To show a beautiful thing because it is beautiful is not vulgar; but to show any thing, whether beautiful or ugly, for the sake of show—that is vulgar. There are few men or women who would not consider that cheap gaudiness in dress, with all its accompaniments of false jewelry, and what is called 'loudness,' was to the last degree vulgar. But the strange thing is, that the very men and women, who are really in many ways cultured and refined, do not see that they commit the same faults in the decoration of their drawing-rooms that they blame with severity in the dressing of their servants.

It would be impossible, within the present limits, to discuss, on the one hand, all the vulgarities of ordinary furnishing, or to describe, on the other hand, all the desirable refinements in it; but a few instances we may deal with. We will suppose that we are in an ordinary drawing-room in a moderately-sized house. The first object that strikes us as we enter, perhaps, is a gigantic looking-glass, about four feet wide and six feet high, placed over the mantelpiece. It is surrounded with a rather elaborate and coarse gilt moulding. Such a mirror is often the first thing thought of to decorate the walls and to prevent the room from looking bare. If we ask why a large mirror over the chimney-piece (or any where else) is thought desirable, we probably hear that 'it gives size to the room,' or that 'it brightens it up.' When we are told that it gives size to the room, we are presumably to understand that it makes us believe there is a second room over the chimney-piece just like the first. Of course we are never thus taken in by ordinarily arranged mirrors; and if we were, it would be very unpleasant. So that the first reason given in defence of them falls to the ground. With respect to the second excuse for their existence, we must observe that they undoubtedly do to a certain extent reflect, and therefore do increase the amount of light in the room; but they diminish the amount of light that there appears to be by reflecting the darker parts of the room only to the spectator owing to their positions. And it is the amount of light that there *appears to be*, not the amount of light that there *is*, in a room that is impor-

tant. So much for the supposed advantages and beauties of mirrors. Now let us consider the objections to them. We have seen that gloominess is one. Another is the appearance of smallness in rooms which they invariably produce. It is almost always possible to increase the apparent size of a small room in a legitimate way by avoiding large objects. A large statue or a large picture makes a small room look smaller still, not so much by filling it up as by destroying its scale. The eye naturally compares one thing with another, and measures one thing by another. As a rule a big pattern on a wall paper, a large door, a large sheet of plate-glass in a window, all tend to make a room look smaller. Thus the vulgarity of cheap magnificence defeats its own object, and the effort to avoid supposed meanness succeeds only in making evident the very thing it is most anxious to hide. Another serious objection that may be made to large mirrors as usually placed is the unpleasant way in which we catch sight of ourselves reflected in them. This, of course, is a pure matter of taste; but I believe that most people share this dislike of having their own personality suddenly brought under their notice. The effect of these mirrors in promoting self-consciousness in children is also much to be deprecated.

The use of gilding requires very great care. Gold leaf in the hands of an artist may be employed with wonderful effect. It may be made to give lightness or heaviness, brightness or shadow. It may be made to harmonize a system of coloring that would be crude without it, and it may produce a marvellous richness; but exactly in proportion as it may be used to adorn, in that proportion it may be used to destroy beauty, and to draw attention to ugliness. And it must be admitted that the way in which gilding is generally used displays an extraordinary ignorance of its artistic properties. In the first place it makes the objects it covers more conspicuous. There are some things (some carvings, for instance) which are very good, both in design and workmanship, but which require some of their parts to be emphasized and made to stand out against other parts. In these cases we may gild either of the parts and so produce the desired contrast. As a rule, it will be found best to gild those intended to catch the light. It will be found in almost all cases that the use of gold should in decoration be reserved for the accentuation of form. This is of course only a general rule, and is liable to many exceptions under peculiar circumstances. But how is gold generally used? Let us look round the room and see. It is to be seen on the frames of the mirrors above mentioned. The cornices above the valances of the curtains look as if they had been dipped into it, the pattern of the wall paper is drawn out with it, and the mouldings of the doors are covered with it. These carvings and mouldings, let us suppose, are of good design and carefully wrought. Consider those of the panels of the doors. The beauty of good plain moulding consists in the contrast of light and shade that exists between its members, and of the relative proportions of those members. On mouldings of this kind gilding might be employed with great effect, not by covering over the whole, but by so carefully choosing those members that the contrasts of light and shade between them shall be increased, and the proportions of them maintained or improved. The same rules will apply to all mouldings and carvings whatsoever that have to be gilt. As a matter of fact, however, in most houses the mouldings are very far from being either well designed or carefully executed. They are, on the contrary, poor in form and lumpy and coarse in workmanship. In such cases gilding usually merely serves to attract attention to what should be carefully left as subdued as possible.

But, indeed, as we look round, we see that discord prevails. What can be more harsh than the white marble chimney-piece surrounding the cold steel grate? If we chose to give a large sum of money for a marble chimney-piece we could procure one which, with the help of delicate sculpture, might have been made beautiful; but this is no reason why we should spend on bare polished marble much more than would be necessary to carry out a beautiful design in wood. But not content with putting up white marble, we double the effect of its coldness by contrasting it with black iron or steel. There is really no excuse for this. Steel requires much cleaning to keep off rust. A certain amount of iron, of course, there must be, as it is required to stand the heat; but the heavy mouldings and flat surfaces, which seem made on purpose to

give work, are quite unnecessary. Grates can be easily procured calculated to give a large amount of heat for the fuel consumed, with a very small edge of iron round a square opening in front, delicately moulded. If this be surrounded above and on each side with tiles about six or eight inches square, of good color and design, and the whole be inclosed with a good bold moulding of painted deal or oak, the result is most effective, and the cost is slight. One or more shelves may be erected above on brackets or otherwise. All the beauty will depend on the proper choice of tiles, grate, and mouldings. In this arrangement, if the hearth be covered with tiles as well as the sides, the only thing that requires any labor to clean is the grate itself, and this should be made as little conspicuous as possible. Any amount of play of design may be given to the wooden surroundings. They may be ornamented with pilasters or brackets or shelves or panels, carried up to the ceiling or left three or four feet high; and all this may be done more effectively, as well as more cheaply, in wood than in marble."

OLD FURNITURE IN WASHINGTON.

WASHINGTON, January 10, 1880.

THE amount of second-hand furniture bought and sold in Washington is extraordinary. It is greatly owing to the floating population that the auctions have come to be a permanent feature of the streets of the National capital. The mania for the antique draws into the second-hand stores the boundless household resources of all this old Maryland and Virginia country. New England has been swept and dusted for the last ten years, until I should fancy there are no *new* antiques left, but in Washington the demand is more recent and the supply larger. Old homesteads have been broken up by the fortune of war and subsequent misfortune, and the flotsam and jetsam floats up to the wreckers. The second-hand stores are full of sideboards and mirrors and stately chairs that have seen better days. One day some months ago I stopped to look in Thompson's window on the avenue at a brass fender, a perfect Grand Patriarch of a fender. And then I caught sight of a carved bed-post, in the old English carving of a hundred years ago, solid mahogany, good as gold and warm as wine. And then, having got the entrée to this old curiosity shop, I was taken through all the débris, away back to the room where the "renovating" is done, and dull and dingy furniture "suffers a sea-change" into something as much better than new as is old wine than new. It has the warm rich tone that is without money and without price, and which only age can bring. Mr. Thompson has fitted up a number of rooms in old mahogany for Washington people of wealth and taste.

At the great sale at the Gales mansion a while ago, bric-à-brac of all sorts was set adrift. Most of it was bought on the spot by private individuals, though some fell into the hands of the dealers. I saw in a store afterward a quaint old mirror which came from there. It was about thirty by twenty inches, and made with leaves hinged on and folding over in Japanese fashion, and mounted with strong brass rings for hanging—a mirror made to travel round the world without breaking—and it was only \$2.50! Down on the eastern shore, a friend who lives there tells me, there go for a song at country sales andirons that for beauty of workmanship would command a high price in decorative art rooms. I remember an artist who once told me of andirons he had seen in the interior provinces of France that were poems in iron. My friend declares that at a breaking-up sale down near Norfolk the other day she bought a pair of sonnets in brass.

CALISTA HALSEY.

The art of covering wood with lacquer has remained a prerogative of the Chinese and Japanese nations. The brilliant red Chinese lacquer called "Sou-chow," which is made from sulphuret of mercury, was known to the ancient Romans, and Pliny, with his usual imagination, describes it as being composed of a mixture of the blood of the dragon and that of the elephant. Japanese books of a couple of centuries before Christ speak of lacquered furniture. Though in our furnace-heated houses it is not very durable, in Japan it is considered indestructible, and heirlooms six or seven hundred years old are shown. They are always